

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 171094

LIMDIS, FOR AMBASSADOR FROM ATHERTON

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, JO, IS, US

SUBJECT: JORDANIAN COMMENT ON ISRAELI ENTEBBE OPERATION

REF: AMMAN 3531

1. CBS AND REUTERS HAVE ALREADY CARRIED A REPORT THAT JORDAN HAS PRIVATELY EXPRESSED ADMIRATION TO THE US OVER THE ISRAEL RAID INTO UGANDA. WE EXPECT THAT IT WILL BE CARRIED IN THE MORNING PAPERS TOMORROW. WE DO NOT KNOW THE SOURCE OF THE LEAK OR OF THE COMMENTS THAT REUTERS' CORRESPONDENT REPORTS IN HIS STORY, QUOTED BELOW. WE ARE CONSIDERING LINE TO TAKE WITH PRESS; IN MEANTIME REFER ANY QUERIES TO DEPARTMENT.

2. REUTERS STORY IS AS FOLLOWS:

BEGIN TEXT: WASHINGTON, JULY 9, REUTER. JORDAN HAS PRIVATELY VOICED ITS ADMIRATION TO THE UNITED STATES OVER THE "BRAVADO" OF ISRAEL'S WEEKEND RAID INTO UGANDA, U.S.

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OFFICIALS SAID TODAY. THE JORDANIAN REACTION, DIRECTLY

CONTRARY TO THE PUBLIC CONDEMNATION THE RAID HAS RECEIVED FROM ARAB AND AFRICAN NATIONS, WAS CONVEYED TO THE STATE DEPARTMENT IN A TELEGRAM FROM MR. THOMAS PICKERING, THE U.S. AMBASSADOR IN AMMAN. JORDAN IS TECHNICALLY AT WAR

WITH ISRAEL, ALTHOUGH THE JORDAN-ISRAEL FRONT REMAINED QUIET DURING THE OCTOBER 1973 FIGHTING.

U.S. OFFICIALS HERE DESCRIBED THE JORDANIAN REACTION AS UNSURPRISING SINCE SO MANY JORDANIAN OFFICIALS, FROM KING HUSSEIN DOWN, HAVE MILITARY BACKGROUNDS.

THEY DESCRIBED THE JORDANIAN ATTITUDE AS GRUDGING ADMIRATION FOR THE RAID AS A MILITARY OPERATION. THE WORD USED BY THE JORDANIANS, THEY SAID WAS "BRAVADO".

A JORDANIAN EMBASSY SPOKESMAN IN WASHINGTON, HOWEVER, SAID THAT JORDAN CONDEMNED THE RAID AS A MATTER OF PRINCIPLE, EVEN THOUGH IT HAD ISSUED NO PUBLIC STATEMENT OF CONDEMNATION. JORDAN ALSO CONDEMNED THE HIJACKING ITSELF, HE SAID. SENIOR U.S. OFFICIALS HERE SAID THE GENERAL ARAB REACTION TO THE RAID HAS BEEN UNUSUALLY MUTED AND PERFUNCTORY. PRESIDENT FORD HAS CONGRATULATED ISRAEL ON THE RAID, BUT THE UNITED STATES HAS NOT YET GIVEN A FORMAL POSITION ON THE LEGALITY OF ISRAEL'S USE OF FORCE ON UGANDA SOIL IN ORDER TO RESCUE THE PRISONERS.

STATE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMEN SAID THE U.S. POSITION WOULD ONLY BE MADE KNOWN AT THE FORTHCOMING SECURITY COUNCIL DEBATE, THE U.S. VIEW IS UNDERSTOOD TO BE, HOWEVER, THAT UGANDA'S APPARENT CONNIVANCE WITH THE HIJACKERS JUSTIFIED ISRAEL'S UNILATERAL ACTION IN UGANDA.

THE UNITED STATES HAS GIVEN ISRAEL NO COMMITMENT TO VETO A SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION THAT CONDEMNS THE RAID, HIGH U.S. OFFICIALS SAID. BUT THE UNITED STATES HAS IN THE PAST VETOED RESOLUTIONS IT REGARDED AS ONE-SIDED.
END TEXT.
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